

Martin, Butler Both Score 12 Points, Crosby Adds 11, Tigers Dominate In 72- 24 Win

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE – Both Herbert Martin and Miccah Butler scored 12 points each, while Kris Crosby added 11 points, as eight different Edwardsville players scored, and the Tigers played suffocating defense again on their way to a 72-24 win over Riverview Gardens of north St. Louis County Monday night at Lucco-Jackson Gym.

It was the final game for the Tigers before going on to the Mary Institute-Country Day School Don Mauer Holiday Invitational, which starts on Saturday, and the Tigers played very well in all phases of the game, a very good bounce back from losing to St. Louis St. Mary's Southside Catholic 74-72 in overtime at Carbondale last Friday night.

“I’m just looking at the stat sheet, and one stat that really jumps out at me is we had 20 assists,” said Edwardsville head coach Dustin Battas. We really talk to our guys about sharing the basketball, getting the ball moving. As many guys that we have that we think can make baskets, 20 assists are a really, really good number. So, we’re proud of our guys, we thought they did a lot of things well, and I think we were able to hold them to under 30 points, which is just hard to do, and it’s a testament to the way our guys prepared and played tonight.”

That the Tigers played so well defensively is a big feather in everyone’s caps, and it’s something Battas and his coaching staff are always trying to improve.

“Yeah, we’re constantly trying to improve defensively,” Battas said. “We spend a lot of time yesterday in practice. We kind of go over things we need to correct from the previous game, which was St. Mary’s, and then, look at things we’re going after in the upcoming game, which was tonight, and put that all together in practice yesterday. We probably spend 45 minutes in the half-court, going over defensive concepts and defensive principles. A lot of it is just fundamental. I think the four games our guys played, the better they would be. But they were definitely engaged tonight, and they’re probably tired of hearing me talk about defense, but traditionally, that’s been kind of our calling card, to give ourselves a chance to win tough games.”





It's a trademark of all good teams that good defense wind close games, and eventually championships, and the Tigers are no exception to that rule.

“Defense has kept us in a lot of tough games over the years,” Battas said, “and we’ve actually scored more points this year, We’re averaging a much higher point total than some years in the past, and now, if we can kind of match that up with our point total with our solid defense, I think we’ll have a chance at a successful season.”

The Tigers start preparing for the Don Mauer Invitational on Tuesday, which will have some very good teams from the Missouri side, such as Ladue Horton Watkins, Kirkwood, Francis Howell and host MICDS, among others. Battas feels it’ll be the most important run of practices of the season to date.

“We just talked to our team,” Battas said. “This is the biggest window of practices we’ll have this season. So, we try to take advantage of these four or five days to add a few things, there’s a few tweaks we want to make on defense, a few new wrinkles on offense, and keep trying to reevaluate guys and make sure we have them in the right spots and the right rotation. So, this week is really, really valuable for our staff, and it’s imperative that we continue to get our guys better.”

The Tigers started off the game by scoring the opening six points, getting a basket from A.J. Tillman and a pair from Malik Allen to go up 6-0. The Rams countered with basket from Calvin Nash, Rico Lumpkins and Reo Pettus to tie the game 6-6, and from there, a 9-0 run, where Crosby scored the first five points, a Martin free throw and a three from Rowan Weller gave Edwardsville a 15-6 lead after the first period.

The run continued into the second quarter, where Edwardsville outscored the Rams 12-1, behind a pair of threes from Tillman, along with threes from Crosby and Butler, helped Edwardsville to a 27-7 lead. The Tigers outscored Riverview 9-4 the rest of the quarter to take a 36-11 lead at halftime.

Tyrique Collins-McIntyre and Nash scored the first five points of the second half to cut the Edwardsville lead to 38-16 to start the second half, sandwiched around a Tillman basket. After that, Edwardsville went on a 23-1 run, as Donovan Coates, Butler and Martin got hot behind the three-point arc to give the Tigers a 61-19 lead after three quarters, triggering the fourth quarter running clock rule. Edwardsville then outscored the Rams in the fourth quarter 11-5 to take the 72-24 win.

Martin and Butler led the Tigers with 12 points each, while Crosby added 11 points, Coates came up with nine points, both Allen and Bryce Pryor had eight points each and both Tillman and Weller had six points each.

Riverview was led by Pettus' 10 points, while both Collins-McIntyre and Lumpkins had four points apiece and Nash, Dazayvion Henderson and Jeron Barry all had two points each.

The Rams are now 1-6, while the Tigers go to 7-4 and play Ritenour of Overland, Mo., in North County, in their first-round game of the Don Mauer Invitational Saturday evening at 6 p.m. then will play in a quarterfinal game against either Miller Career

Academy of St. Louis City or Parkway Central of west St. Louis County on Dec. 27, at either 1:30 p.m., or 7:30 p.m. The tournament final is set for Dec. 29 at 7:30 p.m.



[Dan Brannan also contributed to this story.](#)